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Fort Amsterdam

in the Days of the Dutch

By

Maud Wilder Goodwin



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The Knickerbocker Press, New York

35786 C-1
1895

Half Moon Series

Published in the Interest of the New York
City History Club.

VOLUME I. NUMBER VIII.

FORT AMSTERDAM IN THE DAYS OF THE DUTCH.

BY MAUD WILDER GOODWIN.

In the autumn of 1626, the good ship *Arms of Amsterdam* sailed away to Holland bearing tidings of the tiny Dutch colony at the "Manhattes," which it left in a thriving condition. The report, forwarded to the West India Company, pictured the settlers as already making comfortable dwellings for themselves. Thirty log-houses, with roofs made from the bark of trees, huddled close together at the end of the island. The counting-house boasted walls of stone and a thatched roof, and François Molemaecker was building a mill with two stories, of which the upper one was to form a spacious room large enough to serve as a meeting-place for almost the entire colony, and the mill was to be still further

Condition
of
Colony
1626

a. m. c., Mar. 12, 1917

Planning
of Fort
1626

adorned by a tower wherein should be hung bells brought hither from Porto Rico.

In those days no settlement was complete without a fortification, and the first care of the colonists was to build a fort which should prove both a protection and a refuge from their enemies. As they had paid the natives for their land, it was not so much the Indians whom they feared, as other Europeans, covetous, like themselves, of possessions in the New World.

After much discussion as to the position of this fort, the settlers finally decided to place it boldly at the very point of the island where their flag of orange and blue might wave defiance to any alien vessel seeking to penetrate Hudson's River, or any adventurer aiming to appropriate the territory of the Dutch West India Company.

The green-turfed land which forms the end of Manhattan Island to-day was then under water at high tide, and the Capske, a sharp ledge of rock dividing the North and East rivers, terminated a little south of State Street. On the slope of land to the north of this, the site of the fort was laid on the ground now marked by a row of steamship offices at the foot of Bowling Green.

The engineer who superintended the building of this early fortification was named Kryn Fredericksen. He found material scarce, and

Fort Amsterdam

241

labor in such demand for house-building, that he could plan only for a blockhouse, encircled by palisades built of red cedar, and sodded earthworks.

While this rude structure was in process of erection, an episode having serious consequences occurred. A friendly Indian of the Weckquaeskeek tribe, who inhabited what is now Westchester County, came with his nephew to trade at the Dutch village. Three servants belonging to Peter Minuit, then Director of the colony, fell upon the Indian, robbed him of his wares and finally murdered him. The nephew escaped, and returned to his tribe vowing vengeance, which he wreaked to his full satisfaction nearly twenty years later.

Except for this ominous episode, the up-building of the little town went forward prosperously. The new fortification was completed and christened Fort Amsterdam and the hamlet nestling under its protection was declared the capital of New Netherland.

The relations between the Dutch settlers and their colonial neighbors were now, as always, uncertain, and ready at any time on slight provocation to break out into open warfare. In 1627, there was some threat of difficulty with the English concerning the right of trading with the Indians ; but it ended amicably. Governor Bradford of Massachusetts received from Director Minuit of New Nether-

Block-
house Built
1626

Threat of
War
with the
English
1627

land "a rundlet of sugar and two Holland cheese," and the nations whom the governors represented continued at peace. This experience, however, impressed upon the settlers at New Amsterdam the necessity of strengthening the very primitive defences which were their only reliance in case of war, and, accordingly, in the year 1633, Wouter van Twiller, who had succeeded Minuit as Director, ordered the construction of a fort more nearly adequate to the needs of the settlers.

So substantial was this fort that two years passed before its completion. Its shape was a quadrangle with a bastion at each corner. The northwest bastion was faced with "good quarry stone," and the earthworks were thoroughly repaired by negroes in the employ of the Dutch West India Company, under the superintendence of Jacob Stoffelsen.

Within the enclosure stood three windmills, a guardhouse and barracks, besides the "big house" built by Van Twiller for his own occupancy. The fort itself was not very extensive according to modern ideas. It measured only some three hundred feet in length by two hundred and fifty in breadth, yet the cost of completing it (including probably the buildings within) was 4172 guilders, or between sixteen and seventeen hundred dollars. One of the buildings in the enclosure soon came to an untimely end. A man named

Fort Amsterdam

243

Van Vorst undertook to fire a salute in honor of the Director-General from a stone gun which stood near the house. A spark from the wadding lodged on the roof, which, being covered with reed, caught fire at once, and the whole building was destroyed in less than half an hour.

The old fort witnessed scenes of jollity in those early days. On one occasion, the first gunner held a festivity at one of the angles of the fort, where a tent had been erected and tables set out. In the midst of the feasting, a trumpeter blew a sudden blast upon his trumpet, much to the alarm of the revellers. The Coopman of Cargoes and the Coopman of Stores¹ were so wrathful, that, they called the trumpeter hard names, and he in return administered to each a sound thrashing, which put an end to the merry evening.

Van Twiller's control over the colony lasted only a short time after the completion of the fort. In March, 1638, Kieft arrived to take the reins of government from his hand. Kieft found the defences in a ruinous state. The fort, finished only three years before, was in a shameful condition of disrepair; the guns dismounted, the public buildings within the walls in ruins. Of the three windmills only one was in operation, and the walls of

¹ "Coopman of Cargoes" *i.e.*, supercargo of a ship, and "Coopman of Stores" store-keeper.

Arrival of
Kieft
1638

Troubles
with
Indians
1641

the fort were so beaten down that any might come in or go out at their will "save at the stone point."

This state of things was the more unfortunate inasmuch as Director Kieft's injudicious belligerency soon plunged the colony into a series of quarrels with the natives. Under orders from Holland, as he declared, Kieft undertook to lay a tax upon the Indians, who expressed their wrath in vehement protest against "the Sakema of the Fort." He was but a mean fellow, they declared. He had not invited them to come and live here that he should now lay claim to the corn which they had planted.

So violent did this feeling become that Kieft found it necessary to order every inhabitant to provide himself with a gun, and warned the settlers that, in case of a night attack, at a preconcerted signal of three cannon shots they were to appear armed at the fort in military order.

The position of the settlers on outlying "*bouweries*" grew more and more perilous. Massacres were reported from Staten Island, massacres often too cruelly avenged by the Dutch, who grew more and more blood-thirsty and greedy for plunder. One day in the summer of 1641, word was brought to the fort of the murder of Claes, "the Raadmaker" (in English, wheelwright) living on the west shore of the river. The old man, so the story

Fort Amsterdam

245

ran, had received a visit from a young Indian, who had been in the habit of working for the son of Claes and who came to the house professedly to purchase cloth. Claes hospitably set food before him and then went to a chest, wherein the cloth was kept. As the Raadmaker stooped, the savage struck him dead with an axe.

**Murder of
the Raad=
maker
1641**

This story naturally filled the settlers with horror, nor was their rage diminished by learning that the murderer was no other than the nephew of the Weckquaeskeeck Indian, who had met with foul play at the hands of Director Minuit's servants twenty years before. On receiving the news of the Raadmaker's murder, Kieft sent at once to the Chief of the Weckquaeskeeck tribe demanding the surrender of the murderer; but the Sachem haughtily replied that he wished the young warrior had slain twenty Christians instead of one and that he had justly carried out the traditions of his race in avenging the murder of his relative. This answer roused the Director to a state of frenzy. He determined to call a council of war to authorize him in proceeding against the contumacious Indians. On the 28th day of August, 1641, accordingly, all the masters and heads of families dwelling in or near New Amsterdam assembled in the fort to consider the question of the punishment of the Weckquaeskeecks.

**First
Attempt at
Popular
Govern-
ment
1641**

This gathering was noteworthy as the first effort at popular government in the colony and the burghers shrewdly made the most of it by appointing a committee of the Twelve Men to co-operate with the Director. Kieft himself began to realize that he had raised spirits which he could not lay, and bitterly resented the restrictions which the Twelve Men sought to lay upon his impetuosity. He desired to attack the Indians at once ; but the Twelve counselled delay and the popular will so enforced their authority, that Kieft was compelled to yield to their judgment and to postpone action.

It would have seemed natural, that this period of delay should be spent in preparation for the strife to come, in strengthening the defences and arming the outposts ; but, instead, Kieft began the erection of a series of elaborate, expensive and comparatively unnecessary buildings inside the fortification, and spent upon them the money which should have been laid out upon stout masonry and iron guns. Besides the fine, stone tavern erected among the thatched-roofed, wooden-chimneyed cottages huddling about Fort Amsterdam, within the walls of the fort rose still more substantial buildings. The most imposing of these was the new church, which owed its origin, it is to be feared, less to piety than to vanity, since, until the taunts of De

Fort Amsterdam

247

Vries called attention to "the mean barn" which was all that the dwellers in New Amsterdam had to show in contrast with the well-ordered meeting-houses of New England, the old chapel in the village had been deemed sufficient by the worshippers of the little colony. Now, however, it was determined to erect a fine church, which should be a credit to the whole province of New Netherland, the expense of the building to be borne partly by the West India Company and partly by private subscriptions.

A contract, "done at Fort Amsterdam," and dated May, 1642, sets forth the agreement between William Kieft, church-warden and John and Richard Ogden, by which the Ogdens bind themselves to build a church seventy-two feet long, fifty-two broad and sixteen feet high above the soil, for the sum of 2500 guilders equal to about \$1000, the price to be paid in beaver, or other merchandise. It is stipulated that the contractors shall procure the stone and bring it ashore near the fort, for which purpose they shall be allowed the use of the Company's boat for a month or six weeks. The church-wardens agree to convey the stone from the shore to the fort, and to furnish the lime with which to lay it. If the work is done "in a workmanlike manner" and to the satisfaction of the employers, the contractors are to receive a bonus of an additional hundred guilders.

**Contract
for
Building
a Church
in the
Fort
1642**

Church
Completed
1642

There were not wanting carping critics who spoke of the *kerck* as "the fifth wheel to a coache," objected to such a use of money, and even doubted the wisdom of building a new church at all, especially in the fort where, as they pointed out, it occupied a quarter of all available space and, moreover, by its location would necessarily shut off the southeast wind from the gristmill on which the settlers depended for grinding their corn.

Director Kieft and Dominie Bogardus proved too strong for the objectors, however, and the church finally raised its steep double-pointed roof above the walls of the fort. That the building might preserve his own memory, as well as testify to the glory of God, the Director caused to be inserted in the front a tablet bearing the inscription :

*" An. Dom—MDCXLII
" Willem Kieft, Directeur Generael
" Heeft De Gemeente Desen Tempel Doen
Bouwen."*¹

A century later the church was burned and the slab buried in dirt, whence it was dug up when the fort itself was demolished in 1789. The slab was removed for safe-keeping to the Dutch church in Garden Street; but on the de-

¹ " An Dom—1642

[When] Willem Kieft was Director-General
The Congregation built this temple."

Fort Amsterdam

249

struction of that building by fire, the slab commemorating Kieft and his greatness disappeared forever.

Besides the ground given up to the new church the space in the fort was further encroached upon by other buildings civic and domestic rather than military in character. The quaint windmill, with its long arms and revolving tower, occupied one corner, and near the *Gevangen Huys* or jail, stood the Governor's house, which for that day was an elaborate and elegant mansion, having an "entry" twenty feet wide, and a double-faced chimney to keep it warm. It was surrounded by walks measuring ten feet in width, and altogether must have required much money and labor to equip and maintain. It is not strange that there should have been some murmuring among the thrifty burghers over such expenditures, especially at this crisis when matters were growing daily more threatening, and the settlers dared scarcely stir abroad for fear of savages.

The conduct of the colonists in general and the Director in particular was marked at this time by a mixture of ferocity and cowardice. A large number of Weckquaeskeek Indians were massacred in cold blood by the Dutch, after they had sued for peace and sought shelter in the fort from their powerful enemy, the Mohawks. Other tribes had been treated

Other
Buildings
in the Fort
1642

Fort Amsterdam

**General
Indian
Warfare
1643**

with equally brutal disregard of both principle and policy, till, at last, in 1643, the settlers found themselves by their own folly involved in a general Indian warfare. The only hope of the colony on Manhattan Island now lay in the protection afforded by Fort Amsterdam, and its inadequacy was painfully apparent. A Jesuit priest who travelled through New Netherland at this time, writes thus of its condition :

“ This fort which is at the point of the island, is called Fort Amsterdam. It has four regular bastions mounted with several pieces of artillery. All these bastions and curtains were in 1643 but ramparts of earth most of which had crumbled away so that the fort could be entered on all sides. There were no ditches. There were sixty soldiers to garrison the said fort and another which they had built still farther up against the incursions of the savages, their enemies. They were beginning to face the gates and bastions with stone.”

In October, 1643, the Eight Men who had succeeded the Twelve as representatives of the colony, wrote home to the “Honorable, Wise, Prudent Gentlemen of the XIX. of the General Incorporated West India Company, Department of Amsterdam,” complaining bitterly of the harrying they were undergoing at the hands of the allied Indians, who having sent their old men, women and children into the interior, were in excellent fighting condition. “The most expert warriors,” the complaint says, “hang daily on

our necks with fire and sword, and threaten to attack the fort with all their force of about fifteen hundred men. This we hourly expect." The only place of shelter the letter declares to be Fort Amsterdam, and this so poorly supplied with men and ammunition as to be nearly useless. "The fort is defenceless and entirely out of order, and resembles (with submission) rather a molehill than a fort against an enemy."

The colonists must now have bitterly regretted the eight thousand guilders which, as we learn from later records, proved the actual cost of the fine new church, a sum which might well have fitted out a stout defence around the little colony. Feeling had already begun to run high against Kieft and his mismanagement ; but for the present no one had any thought except for immediate defence against the enemy. Fearing that their appeal to the West India Company might prove insufficient, the Eight Men ten days later sent a still more pressing letter addressed this time to the "Noble, High and Mighty Lords, the Noble Lords, the States-General of the United Netherlands Provinces." This appeal sets forth that

"we poor inhabitants of New Netherland were here in the spring pursued by these wild Heathen and barbarous Savages with fire and sword. Daily in our houses and fields have they cruelly murdered men and women, and with hatchets

Letter of
the Eight
Men
1643

**Desperate
Condition
of Colo-
nists
1643**

and tomahawks struck little children dead in their parents' arms, or before their doors, or carried them away into bondage. The houses and grain barracks are burnt with the produce ; cattle of all description are slain and destroyed, and such as remain must perish this approaching winter for the want of fodder. Almost every place is abandoned. We, wretched people, must skulk with wives and little ones that still survive in poverty together in and around the fort at the Manahates where we are not safe even for an hour ; whilst the Indians daily threaten to overwhelm us with it. Very little can be planted this autumn and much less in the spring ; so that it will come to pass that all of us who will yet save our lives must of necessity perish next year of hunger and sorrow with our wives and children unless our God have pity on us.

“ We are all here, from the smallest to the greatest, devoid of counsel and means, wholly powerless. The enemy meets with scarce any resistance. The garrison consists of but fifty to sixty soldiers unprovided with ammunition. Fort Amsterdam, utterly defenceless, stands open to the enemy day and night.

“ The Company have few or no effects here (as the Director has informed us). Were it not for this, there would have been still time to receive assistance from the English at the East ere all had gone to ruin ; and we wretched settlers, whilst we must abandon all our substance are exceedingly poor.

“ These heathens are strong in might. They have formed an alliance with seven other Nations, are well provided with guns, powder and lead, which they purchased for beaver from the private traders who have had for a long time free range here ; the rest they take from our fellow-countrymen, whom they murder. In fine, we experience the greatest misery, which must astonish a Christian heart to see or to hear.”

The case of the settlers under the shadow

Fort Amsterdam

253

of the fort, and of the fugitives who crouched within its feeble shelter, was pitiable indeed. The wonder is that the fort and its garrison survived at all ; but the colonists struggled on under difficulties and discouragements, as their countrymen have had a way of doing the world over ; and, at last, in the summer of 1645, a general peace was declared between the colonists and the natives. After four years of warfare, the settlers breathed again. Men went out into the fields by day in quiet and slept at night without dream of war-whoops or fire-brands. The coming of peace, however, did not diminish the importance of the fort. It still continued the *cor cordium* of New Netherland. The weightiest communications addressed to Their High Mightinesses, the States-General, were dated from the fort and here counsel was taken on things spiritual and temporal, peaceful and warlike. Here, too, punishments were meted out, and the punishments of our ancestors were formidable matters.

The Dutch archives contain accounts of the discipline of a female, who was found guilty of slandering the Reverend Everardus Bogardus, Pastor of the church within the fort. It was decreed that the "said female" should be obliged to appear at the sound of the bell before the Governor and Council in the fort, and there solemnly to declare that

Peace
Declared
1645

**Kieft's
Discipline
1638=46**

she knew the dominie to be honest and pious, and that she had "lied falsely." Sterner punishments awaited evil doers of the male sex. Jan Hobbes, for theft, was put to the torture and two soldiers found guilty of blasphemy were condemned to ride the wooden horse, an animal more awful than that within the Trojan walls. It stood under the shadow of the fort, and on its razor-back the criminal was seated, with iron stirrups and leaden weights attached to his unlucky legs.

Kieft, who in spite of his shortcomings was a rigid disciplinarian, achieved order, where anarchy had formerly reigned among the garrison at the fort. He laid down a strict code of laws and penalties, applying especially to those on guard. This code reads :

"Section I : Whosoever abuses the name of God when on guard shall pay a fine for the first offence of ten stivers ; for the second, twenty stivers ; for the third, thirty stivers.

"Section II : He, who speaks scandal of a comrade during the time he is on guard, shall pay thirty stivers.

"Section III : He, who arrives tipsy or intoxicated for duty, shall pay twenty stivers.

"Section IV : He, who neglects to be present without sufficient cause, fifty stivers.

"Lastly, He who, when the duty on guard is well performed, and the sun is risen and reveillé beat, fires a musket without his corporal's orders, shall pay one guilder."

This code of military law was read aloud by a corporal every time the soldiers went on guard, that none might plead ignorance as an

excuse for failure in obedience. Besides this reading of the code, the corporal's daily task was the superintendence of the cleaning and charging of muskets, the examination of cartridge-boxes, and, most difficult of all, the prevention of the smuggling of liquor into the fort. The many records of drunken frays among the soldiers bear witness that this part of the corporal's duty was sometimes slighted, or else that the soldiers had opportunities of securing liquor when they were off duty.

“William the Testy,” with his sharp gray eyes and his round, red face was always on the watch for offenders, and woe to the laggard coming sleepily to his post after reveillé had called to duty at daybreak, or to him who loitered with his sweetheart by the shore when tattoo had sounded at nine o'clock in the evening !

About the time of the closing of the Indian war, the colonists received a document from the Assembly of the XIX. or Governing Board of the West India Company containing valuable advice, which like much good advice came rather late. The letter recommended that colonists should be compelled to settle near each other in towns and villages in order to be able to give mutual assistance in time of danger ; and it further advised the repairing of Fort Amsterdam, which was now in such a state of utter ruin and collapse, that men went

Letter
from
West
India
Company
1645

Repairs
to Fort
Ordered
1645

in and out over the wall instead of through the gate. This repairing was ordered to be done with stone, and the expense was estimated at a sum between twenty and twenty-five thousand guilders. In addition to the masonry, the earthworks were to be restored with "good clay and firm sods" and the soldiers were to be employed as laborers to reduce the cost.

A list of the officers, employees and garrison to be engaged, together with their salaries is annexed, and includes,

1 Director,	3000 fl
1 Clergyman,	1440 "
1 Constable, (gunner)	240 "
1 Schoolmaster and Sexton,	360 "
1 Provost,	180 "
1 Corporal to act as Gunsmith,	180 "
1 Commander,	720 "
1 Ensign,	540 "
2 Sergeants,	600 "
2 Corporals,	432 "
1 Drummer,	156 "
4 Cadets,	720 "
40 Soldiers,	6240 "
1 Surgeon,	300 "
1 Skipper,	300 "
4 Sailors,	624 "
1 Boy,	108 "

A florin was equivalent to about forty cents. This number of florins therefore represented

Fort Amsterdam

257

less than half the same number of dollars, so that the pay of a common soldier in the Fort Amsterdam garrison was about fifty dollars yearly, while the Director himself received between twelve and fifteen hundred. Even at these moderate wages, the West India Company was losing money on its venture, and its books show that the colony of New Netherland had cost the Company more than half a million guilders, over and above returns, during the years from 1626 to 1644 inclusive. As Kieft and his mismanagement were responsible for much of the loss it is not surprising that his recall was agreed upon by the Assembly in old Amsterdam, greatly to the delight of the settlers in New Amsterdam, by whom he was thoroughly detested.

The newly appointed Director, Petrus Stuyvesant, came over heralded by the fame of his statesmanship and military powers. He had been Governor of Curaçao, and the loss of his leg at the siege of St. Martins (then occupied by the Portuguese) had established his claim to doughty soldiership. Now, surely, the seaport fortress of New Netherland might look for better days. This old soldier would see to it at once that its defences were put in order and its guns made ready to belch defiance at the foe.

No wonder that there was much rejoicing throughout the little Dutch town on the point

Kieft
Superseded
1647

Stuyvesant's
Arrival
1647

of Manhattan Island, on that May morning in 1647, when the news spread abroad that the fleet bearing the new governor, Director Stuyvesant, his lady and their suite, had cast anchor in the bay. The inhabitants in their best attire thronged to the shore below the fort, and the fort itself brave in banners opened salute from all its great guns at once. The four ships in the harbor responded with similar salutes, and afterward Stuyvesant came ashore amid much waving of flags and a tumultuous greeting from the people.

This was a gala day long remembered, but by no means the only one in the history of the fort, which was the scene of most of the merrymaking as well as most of the solemn ceremonials of the colony. On *Nieuw Jaar* and *Kerstyd* (Christmas) the Governor's house was ablaze with candles and the young men and maidens danced in the "entry." On *Paas* (Easter), the villagers collected in the stone church at the summons of those Porto Rico bells, whose chimes were rung by a "klink" or bell-ringer, who lodged under the belfry in the fort, and over the door of whose chamber was carved a quaint inscription dedicating "the holy cell" to the Son of Peace.

Of all the festivals which were held in the old fort none was gayer or more memorable than that celebrated one day in February,

1653, when the village of New Amsterdam became the *City* of New Amsterdam. On this day, the city fathers marched to the *kerck* in the fort in solemn procession, preceded by the bell-ringer bearing cushions of state for the pews of the dignitaries. At their head strode Peter Stuyvesant the stout-hearted hero described by Irving, with his regimental coat decorated with brass buttons from chin to waistband, the skirts turned up at the corners, and separating at the back to display the seat of a sumptuous pair of brimstone-color breeches ; his hair standing out on each side stiff with pomatum, his wooden leg set boldly in advance, one hand firmly grasping his gold-headed cane, the other holding the hilt of his doughty sword.

All these festivals and merrymakings were very pleasant, no doubt, and perhaps served their purpose in easing the strained relations between the citizens of New Amsterdam and the West India Company, with which they were continually at odds ; but they did little toward solving the problems of defence from hostile attack which perpetually stared the settlers in the face. The relations with the neighboring settlers, the Swedes on one side and the English on the other, were so uncertain that in a petition to the States-General, the first application for a municipal charter, the burghers humbly beseech Their High Mightinesses

New Amsterdam
Becomes
a City
1653

Character
of Stuy-
vesant

“to be pleased to determine and so to establish and order the Boundaries of this Province, that all causes of difference, disunion, and trouble may be cut off and prevented ; that Their High Mightinesses’ subjects may live and dwell in peace and quietness, and enjoy their liberty as well in trade and commerce as in intercourse and settled limits. (2d.) That Their High Mightinesses would be pleased to preserve us in peace with the neighboring Republics, Colonies, and others, Their High Mightinesses’ allies.”

This mild request to be kept in prosperity and at peace with all the world in these troublous times was far from being fulfilled. Not only did the neighbors continue to snarl at each others heels over questions of boundary, etc., but the Governor himself, to whose coming the New Netherlanders had looked forward with such delight, had grown wellnigh as unpopular as his predecessor in the eyes of the colonists. He early displayed the arbitrariness of his disposition, when in one of the first contests with the burghers over some injustice of Kieft’s he exclaimed, “These boorish brutes would hereafter endeavor to knock me over also ; but I shall now manage it so that they will have their bellies full in all time to come.”

On another occasion when Cornelis Melyn pleaded for grace till the result of his appeal to the court over-seas could be heard, the Director sternly replied, “Had I known, Melyn, that you would have divulged our

sentence, or brought it before Their High Mightinesses, I should have had you hanged forthwith on the highest tree in New Netherland."

The irascible old Governor afterward made his censure still more general, and announced that as it had come to his knowledge that some people were thinking of appealing from his judgments, he wished it understood that should any one attempt such a piece of insubordination, "I would have him made a foot shorter, pack the pieces off to Holland and let him appeal in that way."

Director Stuyvesant did not know the men with whom he had to deal, if he thought to frighten them into subserviency. Adriaen van der Donck and his fellows fought stubbornly for their rights and privileges and especially against unjust taxation. They declared they would not be unequally taxed for the support of the government and the strengthening of defences, and refused the amounts demanded, unless the Governor would supply a fair amount from the revenues derived from excise, etc.

The result of all these petty bickerings was of course most disastrously felt in the condition of the fort. Times continued hard, the Company niggardly, the Governor tyrannical, and the burghers recalcitrant. In March, 1653, the Director sent the following appealing letter

Stuyvesant's
Threats

Stuyvesant's Letter to Burgomaster and Schepens 1653

to the burgomasters and schepens of the little town :

“ Honorable, Dear and Distinguished [Friends]:

“ We see with great grief the damages done to the walls of the fort by hogs, especially now again in the spring, when the grass comes out. We made an order concerning it last year at the request of the Select Men, who promised properly to fence in the fort and to keep the hogs meanwhile from the walls. But seeing, after the lapse of a year, that nothing or at least only little has been done and that what has been done at the fort has again been destroyed by the pigs, as may daily be learned, we are compelled to enter a protest about the non-fulfilment of the promise, being told that the failure of it, the destruction of the walls and all our works, is caused by the Select Men having been superseded and their authority and duties transferred to Burgomasters and Schepens, who had accepted to do the work. How this is, we do not know, but we see, to our trouble and shame, the pigs daily on the walls, busy with their destruction. Therefore we request Burgomasters and Schepens to give an order in accordance with the beforementioned promise and prevent the pigs. Else we shall be compelled to carry out our former order. Relying thereon we remain, Honorable, Dear, Distinguished [Friends],

“ Your well-meaning friend,

“ P. STUYVESANT.”

“ The Burgomasters and Schepens decided, upon the letter of the Director-General, provisionally to engage a herdsman and in the meantime to make the fence as quickly as possible, the Director-General having promised to furnish the posts. Done, etc., this 31st of March, 1653.

(Signed)

“ ARENT VAN HATTEM,
WILH. BEECKMAN,
ALLARD ANTONY.”

Fort Amsterdam

263

It would appear that the herdsman did not understand his business very well, or else that there were more hogs than people in New Amsterdam, for the records five months later harp on the same old complaint from the Governor :

Hogs
Damage
the Fort
1653

“ Respected and Very Dear :

“ We cannot, consistently with duty, omit calling your Worships' attention to the injurious and intolerable destruction, which we, to our great dissatisfaction, daily behold the hogs committing on the newly finished works of the fort, whence the ruin thereof will certainly ensue.

“ And whereas Burgomasters and Schepens, in violation of their solemn promises made both in writing and orally, will not lend a hand to repairing and strengthening the same, we can certainly expect they will adopt measures and take care, that what we with great pains and labor have brought so far will not again be destroyed by hogs, and thus all our labor be rendered useless, it being certainly the practice in no place to permit cattle to run at large to the injury and damage both of individuals and the public. Without more remonstrance then, in case this matter is not speedily and promptly attended to by your Worships, we hereby protest, that necessity compels us to provide therein by the following Ordinance and Placard, whereof we by these presents, do first notify the Burgomasters and Schepens, and clear ourselves of all damage and injury that may follow therefrom. Done at Fort Amsterdam in New Netherland the 12th August, 1653.

(Signed)

“ P. STUYVESANT.”

“ City Hall, Tuesday, the 12 August, 1653, 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Present.—Arent Van Hattem, Marten Krigier, Poulus Leendersen, and M. Van Gheel.

Meeting of
Schepens
1653

“ Having taken into consideration the foregoing Remonstrance of the Honble General, the same is postponed until the arrival of the other Schepens, who are absent.

“ Wednesday afternoon Burgomasters and Schepens again met except Pieter Couwenhoven. Adjourned to 8 o'clock to-morrow.

“ Burgomasters and Schepens of this City New Amsterdam assembled together.

“ Having seen the Remonstrance of the Honble General and his complaint concerning the damage the hogs are daily doing to the fort and the newly erected works, the Burgomasters and Schepens do therefore order their Court messenger to notify the Burghers that every one of them shall take care of his hogs or keep them in the sty until the fort and recently constructed works have been fenced in with palisades to preserve said works from damage, or in default thereof, such persons shall be held responsible for the damage and injury. Thus done and enacted this 14 August A° 1653, New Amsterdam. (Signed) Arent Van Hattem, 1653, Martin Krigier, Poul^s L. Van die Grift, Wilh: Beeckman, Pieter Wolfersen, Maximilianus Van Gheel.”

The flurry of the threatened English invasion in 1653 brought about some improvement in the condition of the fort, as well as in the defences to the northward along the Singel : but the zeal for fortifying died out with the alarm and was finally buried when on July 18, 1654, amid much bell-ringing and public rejoicing, a proclamation was affixed to the wall of the *Stadt-Huys* announcing that a compact of “ Peace, Union, and Confederation ” had been made and concluded at Westminster between the commissioners of the Lord Protector and the ambassadors of the Lords States-General.

Fort Amsterdam

265

For ten years longer the old fort mouldered peacefully away, as tranquil in its decay as though it had received a certified discharge from active duty. But at length, in the early summer of 1664, startling rumors began to fly about of a threatened invasion, which might drive the hogs off the earthworks once more and set the rusty guns to a trial of their strength. Stuyvesant's troublous rule, after a duration of seventeen years, was about to be brought to a violent, if not untimely end at last. Shortly after the Restoration of Charles II., that monarch by a royal charter ("the most despotic instrument recorded in the colonial archives of England") conveyed to his brother, the Duke of York, a vast tract of American land, including on the east the country between the Saint Croix and the Pemaquid, and on the west the tract between the Connecticut and the Delaware rivers with all adjacent islands, thus completely obliterating the Dutch ownership of New Netherland.

Without warning to the Dutch of approaching hostilities the Duke despatched four vessels, the *Guinea*, the *Elias*, the *Martin*, and the *William and Nicholas*. These ships bore five hundred soldiers and had also on board Richard Nicolls, who was to be Deputy-Governor of the conquered province, Sir George Cartwright, Robert Carr and Samuel

Rumors
of War
1664

English
Fleet Sent
to New
Nether-
land
1664

Maverick. These commissioners were ordered to take possession of New Netherland and establish an English settlement to be known as New York. Rumors of the proposed onslaught reached New Netherland from Boston, where the English squadron had put in for further reinforcement ; but the suddenness of the attack gave little time for preparation of defence, and the Governor himself came flying back post haste from Fort Orange,¹ whither he had been called by some disturbance among the Indians.

On the 28th of August, 1664, the English fleet came to an anchor in Gravesend Bay, and the garrison at Fort Amsterdam knew that the struggle was at hand and that sure defeat awaited them. Stuyvesant's position was a most difficult one. The inhabitants of the town had no spirit for resistance, the fort was in no state of readiness for a siege, the hostile vessels were already preparing to open fire ; but still he strove to parley. On September 3d, a deputation was sent to Nicolls, the English commander, but he refused discussion.

“When may we visit you again?” the deputation asked.

“On Thursday,” answered Nicolls, “for to-morrow I will speak with you at Manhattan.”

¹ Albany.

“Friends are welcome there,” answered the Dutchman diplomatically.

“Raise the white flag of peace,” answered Nicolls, “for I shall come with ships of war and soldiers.”

While these negotiations were proceeding the burghers of New Amsterdam were constantly sending remonstrances to Stuyvesant and his advisers demanding a surrender. These remonstrances set forth the weakness of their situation :

“We shall now examine,” they said, “your Honors’ fortress. You know in your own consciences that it is incapable of making head against so powerful an enemy. Granting even that it could hold out against its assailant, one, two, three, five, or six months (which to our sorrow it cannot) it is still undeniable that it cannot save the smallest portion of our entire city, our property, and, what is dearer to us, our wives and children from total ruin ; for after considerable bloodshed even the fort itself could not be preserved. Wherefore, to prevent and arrest all the aforesaid misfortune, we humbly and in bitterness of heart, implore your Honors not to reject the conditions of so generous a foe, but to be pleased to meet him in the speediest, best, and most reputable manner.”

Stuyvesant himself, in the letter which he afterwards sent home to the West India Company excusing his surrender, enlarged still further upon the hopelessness of defence.

“The fort,” he wrote, “is situated in an untenable place where it was located on the first discovery of New Netherland for the purpose of resisting any attack of barbarians rather than an assault of European arms. Having within

**Negotiations with
Nicolls
1664**

Fort Amsterdam

Condition
of the
Fort
1664

pistol-shot on north and northeasterly sides higher ground than that on which it stands, so that, notwithstanding the walls and works are raised the highest on that side, people standing and walking on that high ground can see the soles of the feet of those on the esplanade and bastions of the fort, where the view is not obstructed by the houses and church in it, and by the gabions on the wall.

“Secondly, the fort was and is encompassed only by a slight wall, two or three feet thick backed by coarse gravel, not above eight, nine, or ten feet high in some places, in others higher according to the fall of the ground.

“Thirdly, it is for the most part crowded all round-about with buildings better adapted for a citadel than for defence against an open enemy. The houses are in many places higher than the wall and bastions, and render these wholly exposed. Most of the houses also have cellars not eight rods distant from the walls of the fort ; in some places, not two or three, and at one point scarce a rod from the wall, so that whoever is master of the city can readily approach with scaling ladders from the aforesaid houses the walls of the fort, which is unprovided with either wet or dry ditch ; and also if need be run a mine from the so close adjoining cellars and blow the place up. Besides this, the fort was and is without either well or cistern.”

The struggle was clearly hopeless and at last the old hero consented to the surrender. By the articles of capitulation Stuyvesant and his comrades were permitted to march out carrying arms, with drums beating, colors flying and matches lighted. On the *vlag-spil* in the corner of the fort, the English banner was raised, the name of the fort changed to Fort James and the bloodless victory accomplished.

Fort Amsterdam

269

The treaty of Breda, signed in July, 1667, confirmed England's possession of New Amsterdam. For nine years English rule prevailed in the colony, and English officers sunned their red coats on the bastions of the fort ; but, before yielding the supremacy, the Dutch made one more gallant struggle crowned by temporary success. In the spring of 1673, Holland and England being then again at war, the States-General despatched a fleet of five vessels under command of Commodores Cornelis Evertsen, Jr. and Jacob Benckes, Captains Antonio Colvé, Nicholaes Boes and Abram Van Zyll. At the end of July, this fleet appeared in the bay, and their commander sent an abrupt summons to Deputy-Governor Manning, then in control of the fort, calling for immediate surrender. Manning, who was in control in the absence of Governor Lovelace, the successor of Nicolls, strove to delay the issue by parley, but the Dutch would not be put off, and really in the condition of the fort, which was as usual in a chronic state of disrepair, platforms and gun-carriages out of order, only four gun-sponges and but seventy or eighty gunners with neither spade nor handspike nor other implement of defence, it is hard to see what course but surrender was open to him, unless he was willing to see all the thatched roofs of the town go up in flame as soon as the enemy opened fire. The

Treaty of
Breda
1667

Attack of
the Dutch
1673

surrender, however, was bitterly resented by the authorities in England, and a series of charges was brought against "John Manning, Commander-in-Chiefe of James Forte." These charges set forth that on or about the 28th day of July, 1673, "he having notice of an enemy's fleet coming into the bay," did not endeavor as he might to put the garrison into a state of defence. That on the 30th of July "he suffered the said enemies with their Fleet to come and moare their ships under the fort." That he permitted boats to come ashore "loaden with men," and, worst of all, "that Hee strooke his Majestie's Flag before the ennemy that had landed, were in sight of the fort." There was so much swearing and counter-swearing in the course of this trial that it is difficult now, after the lapse of more than two centuries, to form any judgment of the rights of the controversy ; but it is evident that poor Manning made a convenient scapegoat and, though he prayed on "the bended knees of his harte" that his excuses might be "pondred," he was found guilty of cowardice, and his sword broken over his head in symbol of his disqualification for office.

But the punishment of Manning did not help the British to recover New Amsterdam. The fort was taken, and though Manning strove to make terms stipulating that "all officers and

Fort Amsterdam

271

souldiers of ffort James should march out with armes, Drumes beating, cullers flying, Bagg and Baggage without Hindrance or Molesta-
çon," yet the agreement was not kept ; for Manning declared bitterly afterward that Col. Calvert "ingaged, his hand on his Brest," that upon "ye word and Honor of a Gentleman, they should be Puncktually P'formed ; but p'fidiously breaking his faith and his word."

The Dutch were triumphant. On the surrender of Manning, the commander of the Dutch fleet took possession of the town and the fort. Down came the English flag once more, and up went the ensign of Holland. The name of New York was changed to New Orange, and Fort James became Fort "Willem Henrik." Antony Colvé, one of the commanders of the fleet, was made Governor of the colony and commander-in-chief at the fort.

During his rule the town was practically under martial law. At sunset each night, the guard at the fort, called the *hoofd wagt*, delivered over the keys of the city to the Mayor, who proceeded to lock the gates and place the *burger wagt*, or citizen guard, on night watch. In the morning at sunrise this guard was relieved, and the Mayor again made the rounds of the city, unlocking gates.¹ Mrs. Sigourney,

¹ Instructions to Jacobus Van Der Water, as Mayor of New Orange, done at Fort Willem Henrik 12 January, 1674. "The

Dutch
Trium-
phant
1673

Fort
James
1674

in a poem commemorating this time and custom, writes :

“ Hail mighty city!—high must be his fame
Who round thy bounds at sunrise now should walk.
Still art thou lovely what so e'er thy name,
New Amsterdam, New Orange or New York.”

The condition of the fort at the end of the second Dutch occupation was described by a traveller who visited it soon after it had passed into English hands. He says :

“ It is not large. It has four points or batteries. It has no moat outside, but is enclosed with a double row of palisades. It is built on the foundation with quarry stone. The parapet is of earth. It is well provided with cannon for the most part of iron, though there were some small brass pieces all bearing the mark or arms of the Netherlanders. The garrison is small. There is a well of fine water dug in the fort by the English, contrary to the opinion of the Dutch, who supposed the fort was built upon rock, and had therefore never attempted any such thing. There is indeed some indication of stone there, for along the edge of the water below the fort there is a very large rock extending apparently under the fort. It has only one gate, and

Mayor shall take good care that in the morning the gates are opened at sunrise and locked again in the evening with sunset, for which purpose he shall go to the principal guard and there address himself to the commanding officer and demand to conduct him thither at least a sergeant with six soldiers all armed with guns. With these he shall proceed to the fort to fetch the keys and return these again there as soon as the gates are opened or shut.”

Fort Amsterdam

273

that is on the land side, opening upon a broad plane or street called the Broadway or Beaverway. Over this gate are the arms of the Duke of York. During the time of the Dutch there were two gates, another on the water side; but the English have closed it and made a battery there."

In 1674, New Orange was returned by treaty to the British and resumed permanently its title of New York. The fort also resumed its name of Fort James, but only for a short time; since on the accession of William and Mary it was rechristened in honor of the king, and finally, when Anne, who married Prince George of Denmark, ascended the throne, it received the name of Fort George, and under that title it continued until its final demolition at the close of the Revolutionary War.

From beginning to end of its long life, this strange fortress continued a picturesque lumberer of the ground, useless in war, worse than useless in peace; and when at last it succumbed before the march of commerce there were few to regret its fall.

The authorities for this paper are drawn chiefly from the Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York, the Documentary History of New York, O'Callaghan's History of New Netherland, the accounts of their travels, written by Captain

**New
Orange
again bc=
comes
New York
1674**

Fort Amsterdam

De Vries, Father Jogues and others, and the early City Records, now in process of translation from the Dutch, which by the courtesy of the translator, Mr. Berthold Fernow, I have been enabled to see in proof.

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